



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

Mission Heights Junior College
Flat Bush, Auckland

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

Mission Heights Junior College

The purpose of ERO's reviews is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. An ERO school report answers the question "How effectively is this school's curriculum promoting student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?" Under that overarching question ERO reports on the quality of education and learning outcomes for children and for specific groups of children including Māori students, Pacific students and students with special needs. ERO also reports on the quality of the school's systems for sustaining and continuing improvements. The report answers four key questions about the school.

Findings

1 Context

What are the important features of this school that have an impact on student learning?

Mission Heights Junior College in Flat Bush, Auckland provides education for students in Years 7 to 10. Most students live in the newly developed housing areas nearby to the school. The multicultural makeup of the school roll reflects the local community with the largest groups of students being Indian, Chinese and South East Asian. Many students also speak other languages in addition to English.

School leaders and teachers embrace the middle school model of education. They draw on the strengths of both primary and secondary education to inform school operations. The school operates as four schools (whānau) within a school. Classes of students from each year group are in each whānau. The four whānau - Coast, Forest, Water and Mountain – work in modern learning spaces that encourage students to collaborate and teachers to share their practice.

The school's vision of "growing greatness through innovative, constantly evolving, personalised learning" was established prior to its opening seven years ago. This vision gives priority to learning that is globally focused, relevant, engaging, authentic and applicable to the 21st century. This has provided clear guidance for the alignment and embedding of middle school teaching and learning approaches. The curriculum is designed to foster students to be good citizens who are resilient, enterprising and aspirational thinkers.

An affirming 2013 ERO report noted several areas of strength including leadership, the curriculum and student engagement. These positive features have been sustained. Areas identified for development included the use of student achievement information, and self review. Good progress has been made in these areas. The new principal appointed in 2015 has continued to build on the existing school culture and priorities.

2 Learning

How well does this school use achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement?

Mission Heights Junior College uses achievement information well within each whānau to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement.

Students have high levels of self belief as learners and are well engaged in their learning. They are confident and articulate. Students have good opportunities to engage in meaningful conversations with their teachers about their learning, progress and achievement. Learning advisers appropriately support and challenge students to manage and direct their individual learning pathway. The school-wide use of coaching and mentoring programmes for teachers and students is a strength.

Robust and comprehensive systems are in place to manage and use student achievement information to support decision making. These good systems help to ensure that strategic and annual targets for student achievement are a focus for whānau leaders and teachers.

The progress of all students is monitored and tracked effectively. Information from appropriate assessment tools is used to make decisions about individual student's placement, participation in and graduation from specific support programmes. Teacher conversations based on these data are the foundation for whānau-based professional-learning communities.

School data show that students' achievement in Years 7 and 8 in relation to the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics is similar to other schools in the region. Trends and patterns evident in the data are not yet showing a consistent trajectory of improvement for some groups of students in reading, writing and mathematics. While Māori students are achieving, and some achieving well, this is not consistent over time. Pacific achievement in reading and writing is at a higher level to data for Pacific students across the region, while in mathematics it is similar.

Students at all year levels use rubrics to self evaluate their progress and achievement in relation to assessment tasks. These rubrics are aligned to the assessment benchmarks of NCEA. The college has Consent to Assess National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA). Year 10 students are offered an NCEA Level 1 course in each learning area. Many students in Year 10 successfully achieve NCEA Level 1 credits.

Parents receive comprehensive, personalised reports that detail the student's achievement. Parents of students in Years 7 and 8 also receive additional written reports about their children's progress and achievement in relation to the National Standards.

Students with special needs are well supported by experienced leaders. Teachers assume collective responsibility for the wellbeing and learning of these students. Cultural beliefs that impact on the diagnosis of and provision for students' learning needs are well understood. Leaders are proactive in sourcing external expertise and support for students. Teachers develop personalised online programmes to guide the work learning assistants undertake with students.

While the school has a considerable amount of information about student achievement, school leaders and teachers could also evaluate the effectiveness of specific initiatives and programmes in supporting improved outcomes for students. While some of these initiatives are relatively new, the potential exists for internal evaluation to provide useful insights into the impact and effectiveness of programmes in addressing disparity in achievement between groups of students.

3 Curriculum

How effectively does this school's curriculum promote and support student learning?

The school curriculum promotes the vision and values of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) very well. It provides effectively for the middle school learning years and supports students' ownership of their learning very well.

The curriculum is delivered through each whānau's termly context for learning. Teachers and students develop rich and authentic learning experiences and opportunities based around the terms' context. Teachers integrate the teaching of literacy and numeracy into other learning areas. Education Outside of the Classroom (EOTC) is an integral component of the curriculum.

Students from four year groups learn within each whānau learning environment. Years 7 and 8 students sample all learning areas while at Years 9 and 10 students select from a range of options. At these times students work across the whānau and learn within specialised learning spaces.

The daily DEEP (Discovery, Essentials, Enrichment, Passions) programme allows for further personalisation of learning across the curriculum. This programme provides for students who need extra support through Essentials modules and for those with special abilities, through Enrichment.

Digital technologies extend learning opportunities for all students. Teachers and students use online platforms and forums to collaborate, share information and respond to tasks and projects submitted by students. Parents and whānau have access to online course information and teachers' planning so they can support their children's learning and achievement.

How effectively does the school promote educational success for Māori, as Māori?

The college supports Māori students to be proud of their heritage and positive about their future. Recent appointments and initiatives mean the college is increasingly better placed to promote educational success for Māori, as Māori. Good outcomes are already apparent for Māori students.

Leaders and teachers are committed to growing partnerships with Māori whānau. Goals to strengthen leadership, teaching and learning, connections with parents, families and communities help build aspects of te ao Māori within the college. A recent teacher appointment will further strengthen and support the college's initiatives to build leaders' and teachers' capacity, across the school, to embed culturally responsive practices. Teachers have identified that they want to become more confident in using te reo Māori in their practice.

A whānau hui provided an opportunity for whānau and families to share their aspirations for the learning of their children. The board, senior leaders and ERO agree that an ongoing next step is to embed and extend practices across the school that promote te ao Māori and New Zealand's bicultural partnership with tangata whenua.

4 Sustainable Performance

How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance?

The college is very well placed to sustain and maintain its performance.

The board is made up of experienced trustees. Some trustees also serve or have served on the boards of neighbouring schools that students transition to or from. They share clear understandings of the role of governance within the school. Trustees are strongly committed to the school's

curriculum and teaching and learning focus. They receive good information about strategic directions for the school.

A distributed approach to leadership has been a feature of the college over a number of years. Leadership is evident at a variety of levels within the school. Roles and responsibilities, while being clearly defined, are also complementary and collaborative. Teachers are provided with wide ranging opportunities to experience and develop their leadership.

Student leadership is also a feature of the school. Many opportunities are provided for student leaders to represent their peers and influence decision-making within the school.

Students and teachers plan collaboratively for programmes and initiatives that will enact the school's vision and support learning contexts. They contribute their ideas and opinions to a range of initiatives.

Senior leaders are actively involved in coaching and mentoring students and other leaders. This process contributes to teachers' appraisal. School leaders could ensure the appraisal process better meets current requirements by linking it to *Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners*. Recent improvements to the school's appraisal system have resulted in greater alignment with the school's strategic direction and the inclusion of Māori and Pacific perspectives.

A culture of ongoing improvement is evident in the school. Parents and whānau, teachers and students all contribute to information that is gathered to influence school direction. The rich diversity of the college's multicultural community provides a strong sense of belonging for staff, students and their families. Trustees are considering how they can better reflect the college's diversity at a board level. Trustees and ERO agree that strengthening partnerships with ethnic groups within the school community would enable them to better contribute to the decision making within the college.

Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of the school completed the *ERO Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklists*. In these documents they attested that they had taken all reasonable steps to meet their legislative obligations related to:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- financial management
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on student achievement:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration
- processes for appointing staff
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

Conclusion

Mission Heights Junior College operates as four whānau (schools within a school). Students are well engaged and supported to develop high self-efficacy as learners. They learn through a rich and integrated curriculum that prioritises problem solving. Effective governance and widely shared leadership promote educational experiences that draw on middle years' teaching and learning research.

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.



Graham Randell
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

1 December 2016

About the School

Location	Flat Bush, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	553	
School type	Secondary (Years 7 to 10)	
School roll	848	
Gender composition	Boys	54%
	Girls	46%
Ethnic composition	Māori	6%
	Pākehā	11%
	Indian	33%
	Chinese	18%
	South East Asian	10%
	Samoan	3%
	African	2%
	Fijian	2%
	other Asian	4%
	other European	4%
	other Pacific	2%
	other	5%
Special Features	Satellite Class of Kelston Deaf Education Centre	
Review team on site	September 2016	
Date of this report	1 December 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	October 2013
	Education Review	October 2010